



# MAKE YOUR FURLOUGH WORK FOR YOU

Many employers – in both the public and private sectors – are turning to furloughs in response to the tough economic times. These mandatory unpaid days off can cut costs and help organizations avoid layoffs. (That, in turn, means they can also avoid the costs associated with recruitment and training when employees are let go and new hires need to be made when business bounces back).

While employers see what they gain from furloughs, many employees see only what they've lost. They focus on having less income and less time to accomplish the things they have to get done at work.

Of course, workers do gain something from furloughs. It's a very precious commodity, and it's something everyone longs for – they gain time to use as they please.

The more wisely you use this time, the more valuable it becomes. If you use the time wisely enough, you can make your furlough work for you. Here are tips to help you do just that:

- » Plan your time off: Your furlough adds to the time that's completely under your control. Make the most of it by having a well thought out plan for how you want to use it. How flexible is the furlough policy regarding when you take your days off? If you have a choice between taking your days periodically or stringing all your days off together, think about which option works best for what you want to do.
- » Prioritize: The furlough gives you additional time off, not unlimited time off. You won't be able to do everything. Think about activities that are the most important to you and plug them into your plan. Your top priority may be skill improvement or exercise or family time or relaxation. Whatever it is, decide how much time you'll devote to it and then move on to your next highest priorities.
- » Play the "What if . . . ?" Game: When you're at work, take a moment once in a while and ask yourself, "What if I didn't have to work today. What would I do?" This exercise is more likely to bring to mind things you do for the sheer enjoyment, which can be good for you.
- » Use your time off to do things you take time off to do: Be sure to make this part of your planning process. Make a list of all the things you have to take time off from work to do – regular doctor and dentist appointments, taking the car in for routine maintenance, meeting with your child's teacher, renewing your driver's license, etc. Choose the things that you can schedule as you wish and pencil them in for a furlough day.

There are other productive ways of using your furlough time. Thinking about what you can gain from your time off not only stimulates ideas for using the time, it gives you a more positive attitude about the furlough. That positive attitude will help with your morale and productivity. You'll feel better about your time off and your time on.

(Continued)

*This article is for informational and self-help purposes only. It should not be treated as a substitute for financial, medical, psychiatric, psychological or behavioral healthcare advice, or as a substitute for consultation with a qualified professional.*

## Do you need assistance with daily life issues such as childcare and personal finances? Call your EAP for help!

Your Employee Assistance Program helps solve problems, whether you face them at work or at home. We can address many issues, including:

- » Family relationships
- » Emotional health
- » Eldercare
- » Fitness and nutrition

Call *any time* for a telephonic consultation.

**Call any time for a telephonic consultation.**

**(866) EAP-4SOC**

**(866) 327-4762**

TDD callers: (800) 327-0801

**Or visit us online at:**

**[www.eap4soc.mhn.com](http://www.eap4soc.mhn.com)**

(register with the company code "SOC")